

CCC INTERVIEW WITH CLYDE REICK

Date: March 2, 2002

Location: Bondurant, Iowa

Interviewer: Larry Wilson

DNR: Where was your hometown?

Clyde: Bondurant.

DNR: How old were you when you went in?

Clyde: 20 years old.

DNR: What type of work did you do before you joined?

Clyde: Farming and construction.

DNR: Why did you join the CCC's?

Clyde: Poor. There were no crops to pick. No corn.

DNR: Where was the camp that you joined?

Clyde: Indianola. Fairgrounds. Company 769.

DNR: Were you ever transferred?

Clyde: No. I worked there from October 9, 1936 to March 31, 1937.

DNR: What was the first day at camp like?

Clyde: We got clothes, a kit, razor blades, toothbrush and all that stuff.

DNR: Did you bring any personal items?

Clyde: Just me and myself.

DNR: Were there any items that you couldn't bring?

Clyde: No.

DNR: How were you assigned to the barracks?

Clyde: They just told you. You didn't change around.

DNR: Who supplied the bedding supplies?

Clyde: Government.

DNR: Do you remember the names of the guys in the barracks?

Clyde: Pete Rensfield. He was in a different barracks. He was a good looking Italian.

DNR: How did you get along with others in the barracks?

Clyde: Pretty good. I just got into one fight.

DNR: How was the food?

Clyde: It was the best food.

DNR: Who did the cooking?

Clyde: It was outside cooks. I was in the kitchen three months. I had seven stoves. I had to turn the lids over every day and clean the soot. I peeled the potatoes. I cleaned the stoves. The reason I was in there was I bought a motorcycle and it got away from me. I got a mouthful of gravel and a belly full of gravel. I spent 17 days in the Fort Des Moines hospital.

DNR: How were the holiday meals?

Clyde: We had Thanksgiving. I would ride home on the weekend. There were a lot of WWI veterans in the camp.

DNR: When was pay day?

Clyde: First of the month. \$25 went home and I kept \$5. I painted signs to earn extra money. That wasn't very much money. I worked for .25 cents a day before I got there.

DNR: Did they take you to work everyday?

Clyde: Everyday we went in Dodge trucks.

DNR: How did you spend your money?

Clyde: Candy and beer. We had a PX there in camp.

DNR: When were your days off?

Clyde: Weekends.

DNR: Was the Sabbath observed?

Clyde: I don't remember.

DNR: Did you have sports activities or a rec hall?

Clyde: Nothing like that.

DNR: Did you have any personal conflicts?

Clyde: Just once with someone bullying other enlistees. Once the captain wanted me to pick up cigarette butts in the camp. I told him and the lieutenant that I don't smoke and I am not picking them up. He just smiled at me and went about his business. Another time I walked by him and saluted him. He didn't salute back. I told him, "You have to return my salute you know."

DNR: How did arguments get settled?

Clyde: Everybody got along real good. I never saw any fights.

DNR: Were there any educational or vocational training?

Clyde: Yes. Carpentry and anything you wanted too. It was there. You had some good leaders who knew what they were teaching.

DNR: Do you remember any of their names?

Clyde: Scott was one of them. G. R. Scott.

DNR: Were these held in the camp?

Clyde: Yes.

DNR: What projects were you and your camp involved in?

Clyde: The sewer went bad in the bath house. George tried to dig a new ditch and it didn't work. But I went out there and I fixed it.

DNR: According to these pictures you were building the lodge there?

Clyde: Yes. We had a limestone quarry.

DNR: What did you do on the buildings?

Clyde: I cut the rafters and cut the grooves.

DNR: How did you learn to make those cuts?

Clyde: Common sense.

DNR: Who were your leaders?

Clyde: Sap, Howard Williams and Scott.

DNR: Everybody get along when working?

Clyde: Like one big family.

DNR: How did you get your work assignments?

Clyde: They just sent us out to work. We had a guy who played saxophone. His name was Charles Kissinger.

DNR: What kind of equipment did you use?

Clyde: Chisels, hammers, saws.

DNR: Did you stay in contact with the CCC enlistees?

Clyde: No. I talked to Pete though. His family later said he was dead.

DNR: How did the city and country kids get along in the camp?

Clyde: Okay.

DNR: Were there any minorities?

Clyde: All white.

DNR: Did you learn any specific skills in the camp?

Clyde: No. I liked to show off and do the heavy work.

DNR: Did you do any carpentry work when you left the CCC's?

Clyde: All my life. My son is a carpenter and electrician.

DNR: Were there any injuries in the camp?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Was there a doctor or nurse there in camp?

Clyde: They had a hospital.

DNR: Were you ever injured?

Clyde: No. But they quarantined me once.

DNR: Were there any diseases in camp?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Were there rodents or insects?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Did you do any work in the local community?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Did you have contact with the local community?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Were there any Masonic or similar organizations?

Clyde: No.

DNR: Were there contacts with females?

Clyde: Well we would go to Second Street where they walked up and down in Des Moines.

DNR: Were there any problems with the local boys in Indianola and the CCC guys?

Clyde: No.

DNR: How did the local folks view the CCC camp in Indianola?

Clyde: They treated you real nice.

DNR: Do you have any memorable experience in the CCC?

Clyde: One time when I was on KP, the guy in there needed to get a pail of milk and he spilled it everywhere. He was a good guy. He was one of the cooks. We had a baker in there.

DNR: Did you have any odd experiences in the camp?

Clyde: Just me being there.

DNR: What was your biggest accomplishment at the camp?

Clyde: Learning the rules and to obey.

DNR: How was your life changed by going to the CCC's?

Clyde: It was a good life.

DNR: What did you do after the CCC's?

Clyde: I went to work on the farm. Then in Des Moines I worked construction. In the winter I would shuck corn by hand. I shucked 180 bushels of corn. One bushel is one hundred ears. Every two hours I had 45 bushels. It takes a while to learn it. Grandpa ploughed 28 acres by foot in eight days. He could kill anybody. During WWII we transported hogs. Some of them weighed 900 pounds. I rode freight trains to the West Coast and to the Dakotas. I retired when I couldn't get on a ladder anymore; I was 75 years old. I retired completely when I was 80. But I still paint walls. I had an Indian motorcycle. I was 21. Two or three times I rode out to California. I liked riding in the reefers, flat cars, and utility cars.

DNR: Did you have to shower every day and go to bed at a certain time?

Clyde: Yes.

DNR: Did they do inspections?

Clyde: Yes. Sometimes they would come in the middle of the night.

DNR: Did the bed have to make a quarter bounce?

Clyde: Yes. You had to clean the mattress everyday.

DNR: Were there pranks?

Clyde: Yes.

DNR: Do you remember LEM's?

Clyde: They were in the CCC camp.

DNR: Do you remember any of them?

Clyde: No.

END OF TRANSCRIPT – SAM J. HAIM – SCRIBE

Reviewed and some grammatical changes made by Larry Wilson on August 9, 2005 after talking with Mr. Reick's daughter. Mr. Reick passed away in September, 2004.